



# United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS

Washington, DC 20240

## Memorandum

To: All Regional Directors  
Attention: Regional Fire Management Officers  
Regional Aviation Managers

Through: Deputy Bureau Director, Field Operations

From: Director, Bureau of Indian Affairs

Subject: Wildland Fire Aviation Base and Crew Preparedness Evaluations

The Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) National Aviation Office is scheduling annual aircraft base and crew readiness evaluations, aviation safety and contract compliance reviews via site visits for the 2023 fire season. Exclusive Use Fire Contract Aircraft measured availability periods have begun and wildland fire aviation bases and crews are being activated.

The purpose of the visit is to evaluate the general readiness of the aviation personnel, identify and correct any safety or operational deficiencies related to the aviation base or crew. It should be stressed that the evaluation process is meant to be constructive and part of a continuing improvement process. Aviation Safety's four key components of Policy, Risk Management, Assurance and Promotion are the fundamental areas which will be evaluated.

These site visits meet the requirements and recommendations identified in the Departmental Manual 350-353, Indian Affairs Manual (IAM) 57 chapter 2, BIA National Aviation Plan, National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) Standards for Helicopter Operations Appendix E, NWCG Standards for Airtanker Base Operations Appendix M, NWCG Standards for Aerial Supervision.

Site visits will occur as fire season and activity dictates, beginning with the southern regions in May and the northern regions in early July. Specific arrival and departure dates will be coordinated with the Regional Fire Management Officers/Regional Aviation Managers who will have responsibility for communicating the schedule of visit to their management.

A team of aviation specialists will conduct the site visits, the size of the team will be between three and five people. Each will be focused on their area of expertise, which includes safety, operations, administration, airplane, and helicopter.

Each visit will consist of an initial in-briefing with Fire and Aviation Management personnel and a closeout, to review positive aspects of the evaluation as well as deficiencies. The evaluation team will follow up with written documentation provided to the appropriate Line Officer.

It is recommended each office review past evaluations and corrective action plans prior to the visit in preparation to discuss findings, corrective actions, and barriers to improvements.

Follow-up conversations, either formal or informal, will be scheduled to ensure corrective action plans have been created and implemented to rectify deficiencies.

Questions should be directed to Acting National Aviation Manager, Dave Underwood, at [ewing.underwood@bia.gov](mailto:ewing.underwood@bia.gov) or 505-362-7029.